

1 Introduction

In the spring of 2006, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the City of Stuttgart and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions created a European network of Cities for Local Integration Policies for Migrants (CLIP). In the course of the CLIP project's work, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions at Brussels as well as the cities of Vienna and Amsterdam joined the CLIP network's steering committee, both supporting the CLIP projects activities by linking to their networks as well as preparing the valorisation and distribution of its results. Already during the first module, the Congress of the Regions as well as officers from the DG Justice, Freedom and Security office/department as well as the DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities department/office cooperated with the CLIP project.

1.1 Main focus and research questions

The first module on housing focuses on a systematic analysis of the residential segregation or concentration of migrant or ethnic minority groups in European cities and on migrants' access to affordable and decent housing. The project's approach considers low income groups with a migrant background only (no elite or middle class migrants) and the relevant part of the local policies of the municipalities. It focuses on the situation of vulnerable groups with migratory or minority backgrounds (migrants, asylum-seekers, ethnic minorities, single-parent households, large multi-children households, low-income, unemployed and disabled people, persons addicted to alcohol or drugs, and in Eastern European cities the "poor owners" of former social housing). Of course, not all migrants belong to these vulnerable groups and neither do all migrants suffer from poor housing conditions. Thus, migrants should not generally be seen as mere victims who are unable to develop positive strategies, individually or collectively, to improve their housing situation.

Housing is an instrument of the integration process of groups with migratory backgrounds and the housing situation of migrants can serve as an indicator for the status of integration and ongoing integration processes in the municipal context. Immigrant households which are integrated into the labour market earn enough money to finance their socially adequate housing. With the dwelling a certain location within the city is connected and with the locations a certain access to infrastructure and job opportunities. Housing is not only an essential sphere of people's everyday life but also a vehicle for different life opportunities in the city.

Quite often, migrants and ethnic minorities face barriers on the housing market in terms of a lack of social and financial opportunities, discrimination, etc. *"Migrants and settled minorities do generally appear to suffer higher levels of homelessness, poorer quality housing conditions, poorer residential neighbourhoods [...], and com-*

paratively greater vulnerability and insecurity in their housing status” (Harrison et al., 2005: 59). It is a fact that immigrants face a greater risk of exclusion from and discrimination on the housing market than the native population. Migrants and ethnic minorities are more likely to settle in deprived areas and in over-crowded, poor quality housing and they often have to pay a higher proportion of their income for that housing. These circumstances create barriers for social cohesion and the integration of migrants into the urban society.

Immigration and social inclusion are key fields of European policy. Thus far, the CLIP project successfully meets the demands formulated in recent statements made by the European Commission¹. It has the potential to reach a new level of comparative policy-orientated research based on state-of-the-art scientific knowledge in the field of housing and migrant integration. Although there have been a lot of national studies on housing in general, and some in-depth surveys on housing and migrant integration at the European level, the aim of the CLIP module on housing is to deliver new relevant results not only for research but in particular for policy making.

Good practice of integration policies take place in a specific local context. There are experiences available at the local level of European cities, which are a treasure of experience and should be transferred to other cities. Although at the European policy level, major steps towards establishing a European framework for integration are underway, these activities still focus on cooperation at the national level of the European Union Member States, i.e. the National Contact Points on Integration. Projects for sharing experiences at the local level and several initiatives have already dealt with the issue of local integration policies, such as Cities of Tomorrow (Germany), Cities for Cohesion (Great Britain), LIA Programme (EU), Eurocities (EU), and Euromed. These projects are either focussing especially at the national level, such as the Cities of Tomorrow, or are cooperating at the international level, such as most EU activities, and are dealing with the field of local integration policies as one of the subjects among other activities. Taking advantage of these previous initiatives, CLIP will

- be focused on some **specific fields of integration** (housing etc),
- consider the **local level**, involving **cities as actors**, and
- develop an **internationally comparative perspective**.

On the one hand, the project is centred around a systematic analysis of the interrelations between the access of migrants to affordable and decent housing (the non-spatial aspect) and residential segregation or concentration of migrant or ethnic minority groups (the spatial aspect). On the other hand, the project analyzes the four dimensions of integration (structural integration, socialisation, interaction, and identification) into the receiving society.

¹ See Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Migration and Development: some concrete orientations, 01/09/2005; COM/2005/0390 final */.

The key research questions for the module on housing are:

- What are the typical housing conditions for migrants in a specific urban context and how have they developed over time?
- What are the public policies of local authorities on:
 - housing in general;
 - housing conditions for vulnerable and low income groups;
 - access and affordability of decent housing for migrants, within the framework of national and regional policies?
- How does the local housing system (institutions and relevant actors, resources and legal framework) function for the specific target groups?
- What are the experiences of each CLIP city regarding the results of local public policies on housing, in particular the interventions and measures for the integration of migrants and the social cohesion of urban communities? What do we know about the consequences of segregation on the integration of migrants in the metropolises?

The first CLIP module focuses on the relevance of housing for the integration of migrants. There is much need to understand housing as an integral part of the integration process of migrants in the urban context, to analyse the housing situation of migrants as an important indicator for the state of integration in the urban context and to consider that the variations between the cities may be considerable.

1.2 Method: Interactive and integrated case study approach

CLIP adopts an innovative process of direct cooperation between experts and practitioners. The experts from the cities cooperate directly with each other, facilitated by the expertise of the researchers' group. This peer-group process of horizontal cooperation across Europe is complemented by a vertical process of involvement with political institutions at the European level, providing the opportunity for the cities to contribute actively to an emerging European policy on migrant integration. Thus, CLIP can complement both the top-down development of the creation of a European framework of good-practice for migrant integration policy and the bottom-up activity of exchange within cities by focusing on the actual implementation and practical relevance of policies in certain fields of integration. It can support the participating cities effectively in the exchange of experiences, which are investigated for their transferability. And it will create up-to-date resources for decision-making and policy implementation by municipal authorities, local housing institutions and practitioners.

The analysis of the case studies within the CLIP project applies an explorative approach. It seeks to analyze the integration situation; the perception of it by both national and local policy; to research into processes, policy interventions and outcomes; and to analyze evaluation criteria adopted at the local level. The data collection is limited to existing data at the local level and thus will not allow for a systematic comparative approach in the strict sense. It also considers estimations and judgements by local experts. The aim is to provide viable opportunities for a process of mutual learning, to

create structured exchanges of experiences and to build up a knowledge base which can provide pragmatic data relevant for local as well as European policy.

The approach of the CLIP project envisions a focus on the research demand and its practical relevance at the municipal level, **involving the partner cities as subjects and actors in the research process**. The research institutions are primarily responsible for facilitating the research, ensuring standards of scientific quality and linking these activities to the European level by ensuring the comparability of the project's activities. Thus, the project has its centres of gravity at the local municipal level and at the European level, mediated and facilitated by the research institutions.

The **bottom-up generation of research questions** which are structured and adapted for comparability by experienced research institutions supports a high relevance of the results for practice and policy making; the dissemination is built into in the research process and relies on existing networks at various levels. The cooperation between the local municipalities and the facilitating research institutions allows for good access to the field and to relevant data, and enables the project to build expert validity also from municipal experts.

2 Policy context at the European level

According to the treaties, the EU has no legal authority over local housing policy. However, housing has been a subject of discussion at the EU level for many years. Several political initiatives have been undertaken by important institutions at the European level. Although most of these statements refer to social inclusion, housing conditions and urban development without referring explicitly to the integration of migrants in the urban context, more recent statements can be found on this more specific aspect.

2.1 The European Parliament

A recent publication of the EP Committee of Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs – **Report on strategies and means for the integration of immigrants in the European Union** – [2006/2056(INI)] is relevant for the CLIP project. This motion for an EP resolution states that, “*local, regional and national authorities play an essential role and [...] their responsibilities in areas such as town planning, housing and education have a direct impact on the integration process*” [2006/2056(INI), point G, p. 22]. It further states that:

“[...] the Union has [...] long been paralysed by the widely circulated idea that ‘integration is local’. Integration initiatives are indeed implemented locally. [...] But integration is global in its implications – especially when it fails. Thus, while local, regional, and national authorities should determine the precise integration measures implemented, Member States must pursue ef-